DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 427 376 CS 510 012

AUTHOR Jensen, Scott
TITLE Apples and Oranges? A Comparative Analysis of Adjudication in Parliamentary and CEDA/NDT Debate.
PUB DATE 1998-11-00
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association (84th, New York, NY, November 21-24, 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Debate; *Debate Format; Higher Education; *Judges; *Parliamentary Procedures
IDENTIFIERS Cross Examination Debate Association; Debate Tournaments; National Debate Tournament; Research Suggestions

ABSTRACT

If the forensics community has real choice between debate formats, there must be distinctions that justify the existence of each respective style or organization. While such differences can exist at any one of a number of levels, this paper examines differences in adjudicating in both parliamentary and team policy debate, generally known as CEDA (Cross Examination Debate Association) or NDT (National Debate Tournament) debate. While the paper highlights distinctions between two debate formats, the most important point to be made is that each format is debate according to this or any other definition of debate. Although the paper's primary advocacy focuses on differences, it should be understood that when evaluating the worth of either format (something this paper does not do), these differences are not very important. The paper concludes that more research needs to be done to compare debate divisions and should focus on what differences and similarities exist among approaches to debate. (NKA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 427 376

Apples and Oranges?
A Comparative Analysis of Adjudication in Parliamentary and CEDA/NDT Debate

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
National Communication Association
New York, NY
November 20-24, 1998

Scott Jensen

Director of Forensics & Assistant Professor
School of Communications
Webster University
470 East Lockwood Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63119
(314) 968-7439
jensensc@webster.edu

CS510012

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

S. Jensen

As the debate community fragments into several formats, points at which approaches to debate can be compared become more plentiful. If our forensics community has real choice between debate formats, there must be distinctions that justify the existence of each respective style or organization. While such differences can exist at any one of a number of levels, this paper examines differences in adjudicating in both parliamentary and team policy debate, generally known as CEDA or NDT debate. The stylistic and rules differences between these two approaches to debate create unique adjudication practices. Understanding the distinctions between parliamentary and team policy judging can better clarify the manner in which each respective debate format remains distinct from the other.

A Framework for Distinction

Freeley (1996) defines debate as "the process of inquiry and advocacy, the seeking of a reasoned judgment on a proposition" (p. 1). Other argumentation and debate texts provide similar definitions. While this paper highlights distinctions between two debate formats, the most important point to make is that each format is debate according to this or any other definition of debate. My own anecdotal observations give me cause to begin with this common denominator.

Often I judge parliamentary debate rounds in which students respond to arguments and strategies with an indict of other formats. Teams that offer plans as answers to conditions

referenced in the resolution are told that "this isn't CEDA," assuming that such an indict renders the approach illegitimate. Similarly, I hear CEDA or NDT debaters bemoaning the fact that there is their style of debate, and then there is "fake debate" that parliamentary debaters practice.

I much prefer to highlight--actually celebrate--the similarities between parliamentary and team policy debate. While this paper's primary advocacy focuses on differences, it should be understood that when evaluating the worth of either format (something this paper does not do), these differences do not make a difference.

The most profound differences between parliamentary and team policy debating lie in the rules and frameworks within which each function. As is the case in any debate, perhaps the place to begin is the resolution. Argumentative approaches are, ideally, more diverse in parliamentary debate as a result of the resolution changing each round. Debaters are forced to demonstrate an ability to engage in several forms of advocacy, ranging from policy analysis to values argumentation.

Other differences are a result of the structural distinctions between National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) debate and other forms of team policy debate. Most remaining differences stem from the model of British Parliament that NPDA argumentation follows. Time limits are different, cross examination does not exist as a formal element of the debate, only one rebuttal per team is given, and the debaters

assume named positions such as Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition.

A final set of differences deal with style of advocacy in which debaters engage themselves. Evidence in a parliamentary debate takes the form of paraphrased knowledge, examples, and rhetorical devices such as metaphors. Delivery styles are more diverse in parliamentary rounds, but generally follow a more conversational pace and style.

Clearly other differences can be found between parliamentary and team policy debating. What is outlined herein, however, constitutes key differences that may explain the contrasting adjudication that takes place in each format.

Parliamentary and Policy Debate Adjudication

Freeley (1996) writes that debate judges fulfill two responsibilities--they are decision makers who must determined which team did the better debating, as well as critics who must communicate their decisions in a meaningful manner. This duality of judge responsibility is true for any debate judge, whether the argumentation being evaluated is in a parliamentary or policy debate round. Beyond this similarity, this paper highlights seven ways in which parliamentary and team policy adjudication differ from one ancther. Generally speaking, these differences are in the areas of codified judging behaviors, interventionism, diversity of the judging pool, skills on which the judge focuses, content of the debate on which the judge focuses, the form of feedback given, and geographical consistency of the judging in

each debate format.

Codified Judging Behaviors

I start here because I think this is the most profound difference between parliamentary and team policy adjudication. This is also a difference that is at least in part responsible for other differences. A number of factors contribute to parliamentary debate judging being less normative than team policy debate judging. Among primary influences are the changing resolutions, focus on diverse presentational styles, and the youth of parliamentary debate. While judging approaches certainly vary among team policy adjudicators, the uniform resolution and established policy debate theory provide for a relative commonness among policy critics. Parliamentary debate theory is still evolving, and is largely dependent upon the nature of the resolution being debated. Judging will always be a subjective element of competitive academic debate. The extent of the subjectivity, however, is greater among parliamentary adjudicators than among team policy adjudicators.

Interventionism

The parliamentary debate judge actually serves as "Speaker of the House," much as is the case within Parliament. In all debate formats judges are expected to maintain decorum and fairness. The manner in which the parliamentary debate maintains order is very pronounced. While some interaction between debaters and the judge may take place in team policy debate rounds, this interaction is generally informal and limited.

Likewise, the active involvement of the policy judge is not an expectation in every debate round, as opposed to the parliamentary debate round in which judge participation is commonplace. Within parliamentary debate rounds the judge may be asked to rule of points of order or points of personal privilege. In a more formal parliamentary debate the judge will verbally invite each debater to speak. While not an arguer in either format, the judge is a more active participant in a parliamentary debate round than in a team policy debate round.

Diversity of Judging Pools

Given that differences always exist among debate judges in any format, it can be argued that parliamentary and team policy debate formats employ diverse judging pools. The range of diversity, however, is greater within parliamentary debate divisions than in team policy divisions. A number of factors contribute to this reality. The practice of mutual preference judge assignments is much more common within team policy tournaments than in any other debate formats. Allowing students some control over their potential judging pool obviously limits the diversity among the adjudicators those debaters may receive. Parliamentary debate is still young and evolving, which necessarily means that judging practices among parliamentary adjudicators are also evolving. Team policy debaters advocate the same resolution throughout the year, allowing for judging to become somewhat more consistent as the year progresses (positions become more known, "standard" arguments take clearer forms,

etc.). A new resolution in every parliamentary debate round creates a climate in which judges may evaluate resolutions, resolution types, and argumentative strategies that differ a great deal from round to round, forcing debaters to be more familiar with their judging pools and related preferences.

Skills on Which Judges Focus

A constant resolution that is announced nearly two months prior to the start of the debate tournament season creates expectations of team policy debaters that vary from the expectations judges have of parliamentary debaters. Judges policy debate tend to point their comments toward content issues, which parliamentary debate judges diversity their comments among content and stylistic concerns. While the argumentation is critical in both debate formats, the role of delivery in evaluating effective advocacy is more pronounced in parliamentary formats. The lack of evidence used in parliamentary debate (particularly given that some tournaments forbid the use of printed materials in parliamentary debate rounds) forces parliamentary debaters to employ a greater variety of skills in their advocacy. Policy debaters are expected to develop more sophisticated arguments, each supported with research conducted during and between debate tournaments. Similarly, the definition of "effective delivery" differs as a result of debate format. The rapid speaking rate in a policy debate that may receive high ratings will likely be punished with lower ratings in a parliamentary debate.

Content on Which Judges Focus

This difference may be more arguable than the other six that this paper highlights. Parliamentary debate critics tend to focus more on the whole process that unfolds during the debate than do team policy critics. Note that the language used is "critics" and not judges. This difference lies in the actual communication of the decision. When communicating their adjudication, team policy critics tend to focus on (1) a reason for decision, and (2) an argument or arguments on which that reason is based. Parliamentary critics may highlight a reason for decision, but will provide a greater range of concerns for that reason. This is not to suggest that policy debate critics are myopic or otherwise ineffective in their evaluation of debate rounds than parliamentary critics. This difference stems from the skills that receive focus in the debate rounds. Policy debate adjudication tends to be more focused on the content of arguments, while parliamentary debate adjudication takes into account both the arguments and the manner in which they are presented.

Form of Feedback Given

While this difference is not supported with any empirical evidence, I have read a number of ballots from both parliamentary and team policy rounds. Ballots in parliamentary debate tend to have more comments written than do team policy debate ballots. Similarly, team policy debaters are more likely to receive oral critiques of their arguments and skills after a round than are

parliamentary debaters. A trend has been created in which a dialogue between debaters and the adjudicator is to be expected after team policy debates. Parliamentary debate is much different. In fact, at the national tournament discussions between adjudicators and debaters is not allowed until after a ballot has been written and submitted to the tabulation room. This in no way suggests a qualitative difference in the feedback given in either format. The reality, however, is that parliamentary debate ballots contain more written feedback than do team policy debate ballots. Parliamentary debate coaches seldom receive "oral critique given" on their students' ballots.

Geographical Consistency

This difference is similar to that of the diversity of judging pools. A number of factors contribute to a greater geographical consistency among team policy adjudication than among parliamentary judging. As has already been argued, parliamentary debate theory and practice is less developed than policy debate theory and practice. Consequently, parliamentary debate judges continue to develop their judging philosophies. A common topic among all policy debaters also has a norming effect among judge approaches. It is easier for all policy judges to be familiar with the same pool of arguments and theory. Additionally, tournaments are more likely to assign inexperienced judges to parliamentary debate divisions than to team policy divisions. I know in my experiences as a tournament director my hired judges who have heard both policy and parliamentary debates

prefer to judge in parliamentary divisions. They view the learning curve as less steep in parliamentary debate. This reality creates less predictability in the parliamentary judging pool from tournament to tournament. In short, parliamentary judging seems to be more regionalized than team policy judging.

Conclusions

Much of what is argued here needs empirical support. There is a vacuum of literature that compares debate divisions. This seems odd, given that few developments in the forensics community have had greater impact on our programs and students than fragmentation among debate formats and organizations. Further research should focus on what differences and similarities exist among approaches to debate. Maintaining a vital debate activity necessitates that we understand what we share, while the vitality of organizations rests in acknowledging their uniqueness.

In particular, further research into judge practices might take into account ballot analyses. This paper argues several claims that are grounded in anecdotal support. Are there in fact more comments that appear on parliamentary debate ballots than on team policy ballots? Do team policy critics tend to focus more on arguments as reasons for decisions than their parliamentary debate counterparts? More empirical support is needed before we can assume these observations to be true.

I often tell my students that debate is debate. Likewise, adjudication is adjudication. Certainly differences exist between debate organizations and their activities. These

differences should exist if we are to continue in an environment with multiple forms of advocacy activities. But in the end the sharedness among our debate organizations is much more important than our differences. Ultimately our debate adjudicators must evaluate and educate in sincere, constructive, thorough, and objective manners. What is adjudicated may vary between formats. The adjudicator may be "The Speaker" in one debate, and a critic in another. But in the end the adjudicator is one who renders a decision. The key to effective adjudication is rendering that decision based on a clearly communication rationale, and in a manner that allows students to become more effective advocates as a result of the feedback they receive.

Work Cited

Freeley, A. J. (1996). Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.